



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 01-21-10

Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2010
5:30-7:00PM

Present: Chris Schultz, Cindy Starks, Emily Vincent, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Caroline Ress, Susan Stewart, Ethel Doyle, Cindy Bouvier, Ellen Digby, Carlene Newell, Susan Svencer, John Scheft, Lynn Horgan, Bryan Gallagher, Bobby Bongiorno, Kathy Hirsch, Mary DeCoursey, Christine Connolly, Natasha Waden, Jack Flood, Colleen Leger

Attendees: 21

I. Welcome:

Member information sheet: Colleen distributed a draft of the AYHSC member information sheet. Members were asked to review their information, and to add or edit as necessary. The revised member information sheet will be sent out with meeting minutes. For future edits, please email Colleen.

II. Upcoming Events:

Volunteers Needed

- **Survey Administration:** February 4th-8th (times TBD). Colleen explained the surveys will be brief (roughly 4 questions) in length and are to be administered to seniors as a means of gauging the accessibility for prescription medication in their homes. We will do similar survey administration once every 6 months as a means of evaluating the Coalition's efforts in prescription drug abuse reduction. Susan Stewart and Carlene Newell volunteered to help; others are willing and are waiting for the schedule to be finalized before committing to specific dates. Colleen will email the schedule to the group as soon as it becomes available.
- **Community Forum Promotion:** Promotion of the community forum is ongoing and will be similar to the promotional campaign for the medication take-back event. Coalition members were encouraged to spread the word and post flyers (when they become available) anywhere around town they frequent and/or think would be appropriate.
- **Outreach to faith communities:** Faith community outreach relative to the community forum is also ongoing. Colleen encouraged members to contact parents and youth groups in any parish or organization of which they are a member. Susan Stewart of Calvary Church also volunteered to network with religious organizations around town through her pastor, who has direct and consistent contact with many of them.

Events and Trainings

- **Parent Forum, Monday 1/25 (7-9 pm):** *Good Stress / bad Stress: How to recognize stress in ourselves, our families, and our students.* Colleen encouraged Coalition members to attend

this parent forum, especially in the context of the open-ended YRBS data that indicated stress is of very high concern to AHS students.

- CADCA Webcast, Thursday 1/28 (1-2 pm for live feed): *Keeping the Faith in Drug Prevention*. Webcast sponsored by CADCA on how Coalitions can include faith organizations and encourage more consistent participation in Coalition activities from the faith community. Colleen will be watching and offered to send the link out to anyone else interested to watch live or after the fact. Susan Stewart expressed interest in viewing the webcast.
- MIAA/Partners in Prevention Workshop, Wednesday 2/3 (8:30-12 pm): *Doing more with Less: School / Community Initiatives and Collaborations to Support Today's Youth*. This is primarily geared towards school staff and focuses on action plans and strategies for school communities to actively support youth despite tightened budgets.
- Burlington Community Forum, Tuesday, 2/9 (7-9 pm): *Not in our House: Strategies to Reduce Underage Drinking Parties*. Burlington, MA's community forum will be held in early February and shares a focus on underage drinking parties with us. They are highlighting what other communities are doing and their action plan, both of which could have considerable value to us. Colleen plans on attending and is looking for others to join her. It will be held in the Marshall Simmons Middle School in Burlington. Anyone interested should contact Colleen.

Coalition Corner: The deadline for the February Coalition Corner column is February 5th, and Colleen solicited suggestions for article topics. A coalition member had previously suggested the possibility of focusing on the physical effects of alcohol poisoning in response to reports of young female students from area schools needing their stomachs pumped after binge drinking. There is a concern that this behavior is seen worthy of bragging rights among students rather than as something to cause great concern and alarm. Any additional suggestions are welcome.

III. Updates from Working Groups:

Guiding Good Choices: Lynn Horgan and Cindy Sheridan Curran are running the current GGC workshop with 17 participants. They are following the curriculum step by step, which is working well. There are a few changes they would recommend the next facilitators make, but otherwise, feel the curriculum just flows and is appropriate. The changes they would make primarily focus on the session during which the kids attend. Cindy created an index card with reminders about the refusal skills kids can use and take home, which they deemed very helpful. The idea is empowering kids to think about their choices. The number of participants has held relatively steady from session to session, indicating a high level of satisfaction. Feedback thus far has been very positive, and many parents have been shocked by the data and statistics we've been able to share with them. They will continue to update the group on the workshop's progress.

Youth Council: The Youth Council met this week and conducted the Sticker Shock campaign in December. Students who participated were engaged and excited and the store clerks and managers were helpful. An article about the event was published in last week's Advocate. The Youth Council will attend MADD training jointly with Somerville and are reviewing other MADD projects to determine if there are any others we can implement. They are starting to think about a spring event, although it will be much smaller in size and scope than last year's Friday Night Lights event. The next big task is getting youth council members more involved in planning and implementing the Community Forum.

Alcohol Compliance Checks: Compliance checks were postponed until after the Alcohol Awareness training, which occurred in December. We plan on initiating them soon, and Chief Ryan is excited about implementing them as soon as possible. This year's checks will include private clubs, many of which have been in violation of their members-only agreement and where underage drinking has purportedly occurred. Bryan Gallagher has heard that private clubs have been tightening the reigns lately, especially in light of the liquor stores in town now operating as well as police enforcement regarding serving minors.

YRBS: Susan shared students' responses to the open-ended questions included in the AHS YRBS. By far, the area of greatest concern was stress, particularly in the older grades. Drugs and alcohol were also frequently mentioned as important topics, as were sex, mental health, and nutrition and fitness. Please contact Susan if you would like a copy of the complete verbatim report.

Community Forum: Colleen shared a draft program outline with the group and sought feedback on a few specific items. The first item discussed was how to acknowledge the changing economic and political environment within APS while staying focused on the forum's goals and objectives. All agreed that the situation must be addressed loud and clear b/c someone in the community will bring it up if it is ignored, which will likely derail the program. Several members acknowledged that it is hard to talk about the ramifications if we don't know exactly what the cuts will look like, but the prevailing thought is to be as honest as possible and whenever we can, to put a positive spin on it (what services remain, where kids can go for help). Honesty will also make parents aware of the consequences of the cuts and give them the opportunity to step up and become involved. This is particularly true for the possibility of an open campus, especially when so many parents work and are not home during the day. Ultimately, we will work to tie the changes and possible resulting conditions back to the risky behaviors that exist in the community and what we as a Coalition are doing to address those behaviors.

IV. Year 3 Action Plan Development

Due to a lengthier-than-planned discussion about the Community Forum, we were unable to conduct this activity. Consequently, the Evaluation Committee will take the lead on developing the action plan, which must be submitted with our DFC continuation application on February 22nd. Please contact Colleen if you would like to work with the evaluation committee on this project.

V. Adjournment

The next AYHSC meeting will be held on February 25, 2010. Please note that February's meeting has been pushed back by a week because of school vacation.